

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF NORTH CAROLINA
WESTERN DIVISION
No. 5:14-CV-00257-RN

RICARDO VEGA,

Plaintiff,

v.

WAKE COUNTY GOVERNMENT, et al.,

Defendant.

ORDER

Defendants Wake County Government, Jim Hartmann, Ramon Rojano, and Warren Ludwig have filed a motion requesting that the court strike portions of the Plaintiff Ricardo Vega's Complaint which contains confidential information that is prohibited from public disclosure by North Carolina law. In the alternative, Defendants request that the court seal the Complaint and require Vega to file an amended complaint that is either redacted or otherwise shields the confidential information. For the reasons described below, the court is of the opinion that the Defendants' motion should be granted.

Vega alleges that he was the victim of various forms of employment discrimination during his time as an employee of the Child Protective Services division of Wake County Human Services. In his Complaint, Vega uses the surnames of various families that he was allegedly assigned to work with during his employment. North Carolina law places strict limits on the disclosure of the identity of individuals and families who are working with or receiving services from agencies like Wake County Human Services. *See* N.C. Gen. Stat. §§ 108A-80, 7B-2901(a), & 7B-302.

The Federal Rules also limit the disclosure of information regarding the names of minors. The Rules require that any document filed with the court “that contains ... the name of an individual known to be a minor ... may include only ... the minor’s initials....” Fed. R. Civ. P. 5.2(a) & (a)(3). The portions of the Complaint which are the subject of the Defendants’ Motion may violate this provision as well.

After reviewing the docket, it appears that Vega has begun redacting documents prior to filing them with the court. Vega should ensure that future filings do not contain the first, middle, or last names of individuals or families that he was assigned to work with during his employment with the Child Protective Services division of Wake County Human Services. If there is a need to refer to such individuals going forward, the parties should utilize initials or request the entry of an appropriate protective order.

Therefore, it is ORDERED that:

1. The Clerk of Court shall seal the Complaint filed in this action.
2. Vega shall file an amended complaint with the Clerk of Court by Friday, January 9, 2015. The amended complaint shall redact the surnames included on the sixth line of Paragraph (d) on Page 5 and the ninth, twelfth, fourteenth, and twentieth lines of Page 6.

Dated: December 22, 2014.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Robert T. Numbers, II". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

ROBERT T. NUMBERS, II
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE